

Remarks

Claims 1- 18 are pending, and claims 1- 18 stand rejected. Claims 19 and 20 have been previously canceled. Claim 18 is canceled in this response. Claims 1 and 11 have been amended. The Applicants respectfully requests allowance of claims 1-17.

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended and claim 18 has been canceled. The applicant respectfully request that the amendments to claim 1 and 11 be entered because the applicant believes that the amendments place the claims in condition for allowance. An advisory action is requested.

The examiner has rejected claims 1 – 5, 7 – 8, 10 – 15, and 17 - 18 under 35 U.S.C 102(e) as anticipated over U.S. Patent number 6,865,558 (Pierce et al.). Claim 1 is reproduced bellow:

1. A delivery service, comprising:

a first mail system configured to receive a mail piece addressed to an entity and including postage indicia indicating an initial value, determine a cost for delivering the mail piece to the entity, modify the postage indicia to indicate a remaining value within the postage indicia wherein the remaining value indicates the initial value reduced by the cost for delivering the mail piece, and transfer the mail piece; and

a second mail system configured to receive the postage indicia indicating the remaining value, process the postage indicia to determine the remaining value of the postage indicia, and indicate the remaining value of the postage indicia.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation "a first mail system configured to ... modify the postage indicia to indicate a remaining value within the postage indicia". Pierce does not have a first mail system that modifies the postage indicia to indicate a remaining value within the postage indicia. Pierce only uses the postage indicia to identify the amount charged for shipping the item. Pierce may even use stamps as the postage payment vehicle (Column 6 lines47 – 49). The delivery systems in Pierce cancel the postage indicia once the item has been received for shipment. Pierce uses a separate third party payment indication to notify a payee that a payment has been arranged (Column 5 lines 57 – 64). The third party payment indication in

Pierce is not part of the postage indicia (see figure 4a and 4b). Because Pierce does not teach modifying the postage indicia to indicate a remaining value within the postage indicia, the requirements for a *prima facie* case of anticipation have not been met and claim 1 is allowable as written.

Claim 1 also requires "a second mail system configured to receive the postage indicia indicating the remaining value, process the postage indicia to determine the remaining value of the postage indicia, and indicate the remaining value of the postage indicia". Pierce can not teach this limitation because Pierce does not have a first system that modifies the postage indicia to indicate a remaining value within the postage indicia.

Claims 2 – 10 depend on allowable claim 1 and are therefore allowable.

Claim 11 has been amended to include the limitation "modifying the postage indicia to indicate a remaining value within the postage indicia wherein the remaining value indicates the initial value reduced by the cost for delivering the mail piece". The argument for claim 1 therefore applies to claim 11 and claim 11 is allowable.

Claims 12 – 17 depend on allowable claim 11 and are therefore allowable.

Claim 18 has been canceled

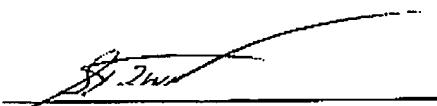
Claims 6, 9 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent number 6,865,558 (Pierce et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,427,139 (Pierce). Because the 558 Pierce is shown hereinabove as not including all of the limitations of claim 1 or of claim 11, the combination of 558 Pierce in view of 139 Pierce does not disclose all the limitations of claim 6, 9 or 16. Accordingly, the Applicant believes that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 has been overcome.

Conclusion

Based on the above remarks, the Applicants submit that claims 1-17 are allowable. There may be additional reasons in support of patentability, but such reasons are omitted in the interests of brevity. The Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 1-17.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

7/10/06**SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER**

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